

**Subject: [trav-ed] >MEETING  
WITH TONY BLAIR<**

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**>MEETING WITH TONY BLAIR<**

Patrick Egan, spokesman for Dale Farm (TERF member) reports that his local MP John Baron (Con) has fixed a meeting with Prime Minister Tony Blair to put his case for stronger enforcement against Gypsies.

John Baron, whose private Greenbelt Bill was shot down some months ago, is miffed because Egan is putting up effective legal challenges to the stream of Enforcement Notices served on plot-owners at Dale Farm by Basildon council.

Egan feels strongly that if Baron is

getting to see the Prime Minister on this issue, our side should be granted the right of reply. NTAG/TERF therefore has asked Kevin MacNamara MP to use his good offices to arrange such a meeting.

Andrew Ryder and Len Smith, as leading members of the Traveller Law Reform Coalition, have been informed of this move and requested to give it their full backing. Patrick Egan is ready to take part in a delegation to Tony Blair (or if deemed appropriate to help brief such a delegation).

Meanwhile, this morning (Thursday), Cliff Codona, (chair of NTAG), Grattan Puxon (TERF) and Father Joe Brown, Travellers' chaplain, accompanied by a member of Commission for Racial Equality, will hold a meeting with senior police officers at Chelmsford to express concerns over Chelmsford Bourgh Council's plan to bulldoze Meadowlands Caravan Park.

They will ask police to give protection to residents and owners of Meadowlands against any heavy handed and potentially injurious behaviour by contractors acting for Chelmsford council - which has no court order or Injunction against the present owners.

Kim Tan, Community Affairs Officer at the Commission for Racial Equality, has sent a letter to Chelmsford council asking Chief Executive Michael Easteal and Christine Lyons, senior planning officer (notorious for her anti-Traveller activity while working for Basildon council), in the "light of its statutory duty" to provide CRE with a copy of its assessment report in respect of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

This Act, Tan points out, places a statutory duty on public authorities to tackle race discrimination and harassment; and to ensure that its services are free of any potential discriminatory practices by carrying out an impact assessment of its proposed policies. It is believed Chelmsford has not made such an assessment in respect of the Meadowlands operation despite the fact that the residents, members of a recognized ethnic group, have registered as homeless.

Their solicitor, Mr Jeremy Brown, is standing by to seek a Judicial Review and Injunction against forced eviction, should Chelmsford fail to respond in a satisfactory way to the Travellers' request for an alternative place to go to. They have said houses or bed and breakfast accommodation are unacceptable being incompatible to their way of life.

The residents of Meadowlands, including young pregnant mother Ann Connor and an elderly disabled man, have been given until 8 am on Monday (26 Jan) to vacate the land they own and "return it to an agricultural condition as part of the greenbelt".

In response, following the example of John Lee and Aaron Smith at Bulkington Fields, they have employed diggers to surround their land with deep ditches and earth mounds. A steel gate at the entrance is being padlocked and barricaded and fires laid in readiness to resist eviction and destruction of the plots.

"The shades (police) insisted in coming in here last week," said Jim McCann, "though I told them to stay off our private property. So some of the lads chained the gate and they had to call for back up to bring bolt cutters before the squad car could get out again. We took photos of it."

Many Travellers and supporters are taking part in a rally at Meadowlands on Sunday (25 Jan) in preparation for the attempt at eviction. A marquee and mobile kitchen will supply hot food and shelter for those

staying overnight, and there will be accommodation in trailers and vehicles.

Members of the TERF Human Rights Monitoring Group and others plan to form a "human shield" in a Gandhi style non-violent resistance to the contractors hired to "clear" Meadowlands. At the same time, a negotiating team, including Cliff Codona (NTAG), Charles Smith (Gypsy Council) and Father Joe Brown, are expected to prevail upon Chemsford officials and police officers present to call off the operation, as was done at Bulkington.